

REMARKS

Claims 1-23, 26, and 27 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 1, 16, and 23 to further clarify the invention. The amendments made to claims 1, 16, and 23 are clearly supported throughout the specification, e.g., page 22 of the specification.

In addition, by this Amendment, Applicant cancels claims 24 and 25.

Summary of the Office Action

~~Applicant thanks the Examiner for withdrawing previous rejections. The Examiner, however, found new grounds for rejecting some of the claims. In particular, claims 1, 2, 16, 17, 21, 23-25, and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102, claims 3-5, 12, 18-20, and 22 contain allowable subject matter, and claims 6-11, 13-15, and 26 are allowed.~~

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 16, 17, 21, 23, and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication No. 2000-318870 to Endo (hereinafter "Endo") and claims 24 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,234,472 to Juan (hereinafter "Juan"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejection in view of the following remarks.

Claims 24 and 25 are herein canceled. Therefore, the rejection under § 102(a) is rendered moot.

With respect to the rejection under § 102(b), of the rejected claims, only claims 1, 16 and 23 are independent. To begin, independent claim 1 recites "the suction ports are sequentially opened immediately before a leading end of the recording medium reaches the suction ports."

The Examiner alleges that claim 1 is directed to a recording apparatus and is anticipated by Endo (see pages 2-3 of the Office Action).

Endo teaches four chambers, 78, 80, 82, 84 for efficiently sucking the sheet body 56 during the recording by the a recording head (see *Abstract*). In particular, the chambers are sequentially opened so as to convey the sheet body 56 (¶¶ 53-54 of the machine translation). Moreover, each chamber 78, 80, 82, and 84 has a number of via holes called “through tubes 73” (Drawing 2, ¶ 58 of the machine translation). In Endo, each chamber has a pressure adjustment valves 86, which automatically opens and closes using a spring 88 (Drawing 2, ¶¶ 58-63 of the machine translation).

In Endo, as the fan 74 is turned on, the pressure adjustment valve 86 in the respective chamber is closed against the urging force by the spring 88 due to air flow sucked by the fan 74. If no medium is transported on the surface, every valve in the chambers is closed by rotating in the direction A. Consequently, when the medium comes to the via holes 73, most of the holes 73 in a chamber with the medium are closed. Then, the valve is opened by means of the spring 88 because the suction force to the valve 86 is reduced and the suction force to the medium is increased.

That is, in Endo, the valve is opened as a result of the medium being provided on the via holes. In other words, Endo fails to teach or suggest opening the valve before the recording medium reaches the via holes. In short, Endo does not teach or suggest opening the suction ports immediately before a leading end of the medium reaches the suction ports.

Therefore, “the suction ports are sequentially opened immediately before a leading end of the recording medium reaches the suction ports” as set forth in claim 1 is not disclosed by Endo,

which lacks opening the valve before the leading edge of the medium reaches the via holes. Instead, in Endo, the valve is opened as a result of placing the recording medium onto the via holes. For at least this exemplary reason, claim 1 is patentably distinguishable from Endo. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw this rejection of claim 1. Claims 2, 21, and 27 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Next, independent claims 16 and 23 recite features similar to the features argued above with respect to claim 1. Therefore, these independent claims 16 and 23 are patentable for at least analogous reasons. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw this rejection of claims 16 and 23. Claim 17 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency on claim 16.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 6-11, 13-15, and 26 and for indicated that claims 3-5, 12, 18-20, and 22 contain allowable subject matter. Applicant respectfully holds the rewriting of these claims in abeyance until arguments presented with respect to the independent claims have been reconsidered.

Conclusion

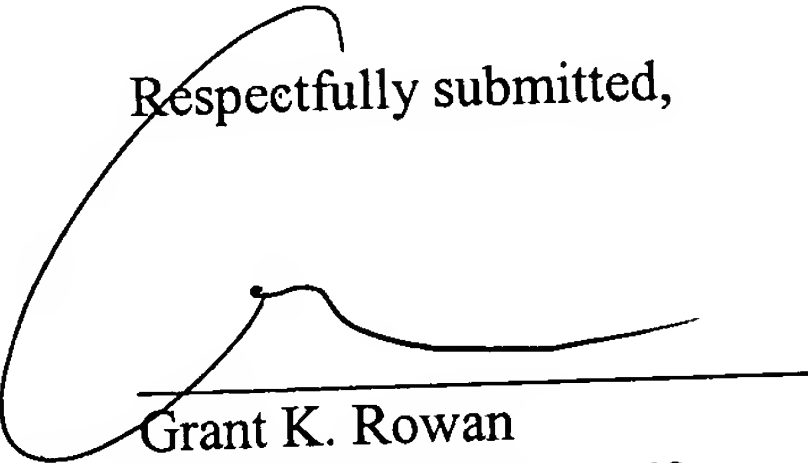
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 10/041,669

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Respectfully submitted,



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